



MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF ALASKA

BOX 102037

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510

JUNE 1990

Volume 33, Issue 6

JUNE MEETING

**June 20** 7:30 pm Wednesday, top floor of the Pioneer Schoolhouse, Third and Eagle Sts., downtown Anchorage.

**SLIDE SHOW** Neil O'Donnell will show slides of a Denali National Park hike from Swift Fork to Wonder Lake, and recent work of the Hut Committee activities, old huts and new.

Prior to the slide show, Claire Lattimore will give a presentation on the effects of high altitude, from a research paper which she worked on.

HIKING AND CLIMBING SCHEDULE

- June 23 FLATTOP SOLSTICE  
Annual club event on top of Flattop. Spend the night on the summit and watch the days get shorter. Be prepared for windy conditions. Class B. No leader.
- 30 CAMPBELL CREEK  
Long day hike up North Fork Campbell Creek, past Williwaw Lakes and out Middle Fork Campbell Creek. Option to spend the night at the lakes and climb Williwaw, if the group wishes. Class C. Leader: Kathy Burke 346-2841
- July 6-8 MT. MONARCH  
Leave Friday night. Peak is near the Hick's Creek trail. Elev. gain 5300'. Class D. See 55 Ways #48. Leader: Don Hansen 243-7184 h, 271-4565 w
- 13-15 CROW CREEK - BIRD CREEK  
Approximately 16 miles one way (?). Class C. Not an established trail. Leader: Bill Wakeland 563-6246
- 15 THE WEDGE  
Run or bike via the Powerline Road. Easy scramble to summit. 12 miles round trip. Class C. 55 Ways #32. Leader: Karen Cafmeyer 345-7546

- Jul 20-Aug 5 ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE  
 Explore the peaks and valleys of the headwaters of the Kongakut River drainage to the upper Sheenjek River. Backpacking and peak-scrubbling with lots of stream-crossings. Group size limited to 9. Cost will be around \$600 for charter flights. Leader: Don Hansen 243-7184 h, 271-4565 w
- July 21 GLEN ALPS - INDIAN  
 11 miles one way. Class B.  
 Leader: Kathy Burke 346-2841
- 22 EAST TWIN PEAK  
 Elev. gain 4400, 10 miles round trip. Class D. 55 Ways #41.  
 Leader: Ken Schoolcraft 248-4132
- August 4-5 SOUTH FORK EAGLE RIVER  
 Leader: Karen Cafmeyer 345-7546
- 11 PIONEER PEAK  
 Climb the landmark of the Matanuska valley. 6300 ' elev. gain. No brush. Need helmet, harness and ascender. Class E.  
 Leader: Neil O'Donnell 274-5069 h 276-1700 w
- 12 SHIP LAKE PASS  
 Leader: Kathy Burke 346-2841
- 18 HOMICIDE PEAK  
 Leader: Don Hansen 243-7184
- 25 PESTLE PEAK  
 Leader: Tom Choate 333-5309
- Sept 1-3 LOST LAKE  
 Leader: Karen Cafmeyer 345-7546
- 8-9 BIRD PEAK  
 Leader: Neil O'Donnell 274-5069

The Hiking and Climbing Committee is always looking for leaders. If you have an idea for a trip, whether an afternoon or several weeks, give Tom Brigham a call at 279-4444. H and C Committee: Tom Brigham, Chairman, B. Wakeland, D. Hansen, K. Cafmeyer, T. Choate, N. O'Donnell, W. Hersman.

TRIP REPORTSSargent Icefield Traverse

Dan O'Haire

Six MCA members skied across the Sargent Icefield From Derickson Bay to Day Harbor between May 11 and 20. They were Tom Choate, Ken Farmer, Willy Hersman, Randy Howell, Peter Murphy and Dan O'Haire.

Gerry Sanger's dory couldn't take us all at once from Whittier, so half camped the first night in Derickson Bay, Dan, Tom and Randy. The sky was completely blue and the way up to the icefield was clearly visible. During the night we listened to rumblings from Nellie Juan Glacier. The others arrived in the morning.

We headed for a small, unnamed tongue of ice halfway between the Nellie Juan and Ultramarine and skied up the trough on the right. Our climbing skins were put to the test when the slope got steep and the sleds tried to pull us back down. By evening we reached the edge of the icefield and camped at 1600', 3 miles from the start.

Sunday we awoke to a sky of cirrus clouds, which piled up all day until we finally camped in a fog. Starting from the unnamed glacier, we skied south five miles across the flats. High above the Princeton Glacier we headed towards the upper icefield. As we gained elevation, only the bottoms of some nunataks were visible. Far below we could see the Chenega Glacier. We descended onto some ice flats and skied two miles across in whiteout. From the 2600-foot camp, after the clouds lifted, we had a view of the next day's route toward Crown Peak.

It rained gently most of the night and we were in the clouds again in the morning. It forced us to wait until after lunch to set out up a hill towards the high point of the route, 4500'. The snow was soft from the rain and sun and it was a real slog breaking trail. Near the top we wound around crevasses, before camping at 4200'.

On Tuesday one rope team got off to a fast start and we didn't catch up with them until near the end of the day. We skied southwest across the flat crown of the icefield about a half mile behind the others. Tom had to stop to make major binding repairs, so Randy and I skied a mile across to an easy nunatak. It was a ski-up but dropped off abruptly on the southeast side, with a view over the icefield and regions where no man had ever been. A large flock of geese flew across on its way north.

After getting back to the packs, we skied on through the heat, the sun burning our hides. During one break I huddled behind my pack with my wind shell over my head for shade. A few minutes later, it turned from hot to cold as a cool breeze pushed a cloud up the glacier. We followed the others, who seemed determined to not let us catch them until we got near the 6000-foot peaks which they coveted. Finally, we arrived at a broad amphitheatre at 5250', looking forward to some days without the heavy packs and sleds.

June 1990

It snowed and drizzled for most of the night and next day. Visibility was zero. I read most of a science novel that day. Thursday morning it stopped sleeting just long enough to reveal the base of the peaks. Then once more we were enveloped in white, that day being worse than the before. In the afternoon the sleet turned to snow and by evening we had a full scale blizzard. The snow continued through all of Friday without a break and was constantly threatening to drift in our camp.

Saturday morning the blizzard stopped and at breakfast we were able to see the mountains again. We evacuated down to the Ellsworth before the clouds could move in again. Once below an icefall, we skied down the middle of the glacier, then onto a moraine on the left side. Seracs and crevasses on the moraine forced us out onto the glacier again and it was late in the day when we finally got off the ice, opposite a side glacier which almost reaches the Ellsworth.

On Sunday we loaded the contents of the sleds into/onto the packs and staggered down the old moraine. We then picked our way along the shore of the iceberg-filled lake below the glacier and finally followed an abandoned stream channel for the last two miles into Day Harbor. We camped the final night near a herd of bison on Fred Woelkers' homestead. On Monday we road with Mariah Charters to Seward.

#### Traverse of Indianhouse Mountain

Ken Zafren

Indianhouse Mtn. (4300+), although prominent from the Seward Highway near Indian, seems to be climbed infrequently. On the 29th of April Tom Choate, Chris Zafren and I climbed what we think might be a new route and traversed the mountain.

Our climb started, as many climbs do, by observation and speculation. On the 22nd, Tom and I climbed South Suicide (5005) from the Seward Highway via Falls Creek. From the fork in Falls Creek at about 2500', we had a fine view of the west face of Indianhouse, although we could not see the lower reaches. From the summit of Suicide we observed that a snow couloir led to the very summit of Indianhouse, though the lower part of it was hidden from us. Still, we speculated that it would be a simple matter to climb Indianhouse via this route.

One week later we talked Chris into going along with the intention of climbing the couloir. The weather, which had been clear a week before, was changing rapidly. Still, we had an unobstructed view of the west face from the 3100-foot level in the east fork of Falls Creek. Chris made a short detour to save a caterpillar which seemed certain to perish in the middle of the large snowfield which filled this valley. A large, steepening snowfield led up the west face to a left-trending snow finger. Above this, our couloir was well defined and led to the summit, about which clouds had now begun to swirl. From below it was uncertain if we would be on snow the entire way or if a few rock steps intervened.

June 1990

We started up on soft snow, which eventually became firm step-kicking snow as it steepened. As we worked left above the cliff bands which guard the northwest ridge, we crossed some fingers of rock on heathery ledges, stopping on one of them for a short break. Some sheep entertained us by cavorting on a most unlikely-looking pinnacle of the northwest ridge. We were now to the left of our couloir and again ascended steep snow before another ledge system led us back into it. Higher up, another icy transition from snow to rock and up a loose, icy gully led us onto the summit snowfield. We hauled ourselves over the steep remnant of a cornice to the summit.

We ate a late lunch, read previous entries in the register, none of which mentioned our route, and discussed our options. The couloir contained some awkward transitions from ice to snow which would likely require belays. On the other hand, the steps were already in.

Occasional clearings of the clouds disclosed a large snow-filled gully splitting the east face and a gentle-looking northeast ridge also seemed to promise a simple descent. In addition, the map showed the east side of the mountain to be far less steep than our west face. We headed down the easy northeast ridge with only a few minor difficulties, knowing that we could traverse into the large gully anytime. A short step of only 40 feet which was very exposed forced us toward the gully, but we worked our way back to the ridge, only to see a much larger step below. This was enough to cause us to cast our lot with the gully. The gully went well enough at first, with a short rock step to add interest, but eventually it ended in a large cliff, the bottom of which seemed an indeterminate distance below us.

A bit of prospecting to the north showed that the northeast ridge was now a long way away and blocked by some formidable cliffs. To our vast relief, we were able to traverse south to a large snowfield which ended in the lower reaches of the large snow gully. A wild glissade down this and down over a thousand feet of narrow gully very nearly deposited us in the stream at a thin spot in the snow. Below, devil's club and alders seemed to block progress, so we hauled ourselves out of the gully and descended through hemlocks. Soon we encountered a very overgrown old logging track, which led to one less overgrown. This one joined another road, still less overgrown, until, after a few more forks we found ourselves on the main road which led us to the Turnagain House on the Hwy. The three hours spent at the Turnagain House eating appetizers while waiting for the highway to reopen after an accident only seemed to heighten the sense of adventure.

### Adventures of a Peon Triathlete

Kathy Burke

Doing a triathlon is one of those things on my list that I've conveniently put off for a couple of years. Well, not this year, while waiting for the snow to melt off those mountain trails, I did the Icebreaker triathlon.

To register, you had to know how fast you could swim, that way they could seed you in some kind of order. I hadn't been swimming in a year and a half, so I headed for the Service High Pool to swim laps and get some idea of

June 1990

my time. Turns out that was my training for the swimming part of the triathlon!

The race started at the West High Pool at 8:30, it was 10:05 by the time I got in the pool (this will give you some idea of how fast I swim). Actually, I swam 3 minutes faster than I thought I would, which could make a difference of getting in the pool a half hour earlier. Mary Savage was my handler (she kept track of the number of laps I swam). She trained for this by practicing counting to eleven the week before. Linda White ended up being someone else's handler and counted to eleven with no training at all. After being handlers they reported no sore muscles, only a small amount of counting fatigue. The clothes change went fast, although next time I'll probably cut down on time by not putting on deoderant.

Running the 5.5K went uneventful, just plug in the music and cruise on down the trail. I saw my first red-necked grebe of the year. Linda White and Jenny Parks met me at the bottom of the hill near Earthquake Park and inspired me up the hill to the bike.

Earlier that morning we dropped off my bike. You could tell us recreationalists, our bikes had kick-stands. The serious bikes had shoes attached to the pedals and solid back wheels. Anyway, at the parking lot Don Hansen and Mary cheered me on (Don had already finished the race!). I found my bike quickly, wasn't hard, it was the only one left in the lot. I really felt I was going to hurt myself on the bike. My legs were rubbery and I felt I was going to get on, ride a few yards and then fall over (you know, like the guy on the tricycle in Laugh-In), but the 12K biking went ok, just jumped on and cranked away. Usually, on downhills, I'm chicken and break to a controllable 5 mph, but you guys would have been proud of me, I just let her rip and screamed down those hills at an unbelievable 10 mph! Then, after a while, I even shifted onto the big chain wheel and was pedaling down the hills. This is when I knew I was getting too serious - what's a bike ride without coasting downhill!

Anyway, I crossed the finish line one hour and 41 minutes later, and found out I did not have the slowest time. It was fun and I learned a lot, to cut down on time leave the deoderant at home and maybe go 15 mph down the hills. Maybe I'll even take the kick-stand off my bike -- Naaaw.

#### Memorial Day Hike to Boulder Creek

Bill Wakeland

We assembled at the U of A Saturday, and it appeared to be more of recruiting drive than a hike, with six new members signing up. Three of them were surprises to the leader. Please, guys, check with the leader in advance. It is to prevent these surprises that we request advance sign-up and do not show the time and place to meet in SCREE or the newspaper.

We got under way from Purinton Creek, about mile 90 on the Glenn Hwy, around noon of a beautiful day and grunted up the first few hills of the ATV trail, marvelling over the views of the Chugach peaks and glaciers and the vivid greens of spring. Day hikers Linda White and Jane Stramen accompanied us most of the way. The wet spots were enlarged some more by ATVs but spring was perhaps farther along than most previous trips. The route in and out

June 1990

follows the old Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina trail, and is about seven miles in, mostly on the "improved" trail. The large camping area in cottonwoods has not yet been invaded, but ATVs do go clear around the large wooded area to get to the old Simpson cabin and the airstrip. An airplane was using the strip, apparently looking for bears, and somebody tried to cross the turbulent Boulder Creek with an ATV, and busted it up. We were, of course, broken-hearted to hear this. To top it off, there was a brand new survey line through our campsite. Later inquiry disclosed this to be a 160-acre native allotment to Timothy Twitchell. It appears that Boulder Creek may need to be replaced for the spring ritual hike.

Saturday evening was open house to inspect new tents, and later one of the recruits, Kyle Sellars (age 12) got a poker game going. Kyle was sponsored by Bill Barnes, approaching age 70, for an interesting contrast. On the hike out, Bill took pity on Brian Bannon, who was trying to get in shape for heavier loads, and let him carry some of his gear.

Sunday we split into groups to go various ways, but unlike some trips before, no one crossed Boulder Creek. Bill B. did practically nothing, but in his words, he did it well. Fred and Ann Kampfer, along with Brian, explored up the river to where it closed off against a rock wall. Bruce Abramson and Janet Wagner bushwacked up to the escarpment SE of camp and found not only sheep, but rams! John Gibbs, Les Gara and Kyle tried fishing in the ponds and creek east of camp, and finding no fish they too scrambled up to see the sheep.

Don Hansen and myself backtracked our route in and bushwacked off to the south to locate a cabin belonging to a friend of mine, and then found and stalked a cow moose with a tiny calf. We got right up to about 40 feet to take photos and then blew it.

The high point of these forays, 5100 feet, was reached by the climbers Breck Tostevin, Kevin Criddle, Larry Vetter and Minly Baum, who reached the higher of the two peaks on the west end of Anthracite Ridge, that looks up east of the campsite.

The trip out Monday was facilitated by cloudy weather in the morning, but it got downright hot that afternoon. The trail has not been navigated by the ATVs and was a scenic treat all the way. Moose, and perhaps caribou in the first few miles, have rearranged the trail, which seems to come and go anyway, and we lost it frequently until well into the timber on a route that drops about 1500 feet to Sawmill Creek. One last grunt and we found the end of the homesteaders road, and several new cabins, and emerged on the highway near Don's truck, left at about mile 79 to transport drivers back to Purinton Creek. The trail out is estimated at about 10 miles, and much of it is in need of brush and tree-cutting.

#### MINUTES OF THE MAY MEETING

The May meeting was held on the 16th. President Neil O'Donnell and Secretary Dan O'Haire both being absent, Vice-President Alan Julliard handled the duties. More than a dozen visitors/new members introduced themselves, the most seen in a while. Alan related a story of getting SCREE out every month and the difficulties faced at the Post Office. Having made an error of

putting a group of newsletters in the wrong tray (there were two trays) at the bulk mailings office, he had to return to the PO in order to move the offending mail from one tray to the other thereby saving the Club a penalty of \$4.81! Climbing may be hard or even life-threatening, but it beats fighting a bureaucracy any day.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Money Market	-	\$3893.36
Checking Acct	-	1355.92
Petty Cash	-	<u>52.10</u>
Total		\$5301.38

COMMITTEES:

Hut Committee. Gretchen gave her last report as chairperson; Marcy Baker will be taking over from here. We thank her for leading us through these past years as we prepare to construct two new huts; she has spent a tremendous amount of time organizing these projects, including the mug and t-shirt sales to provide the needed funds. Gretchen announced the need for people to help build the Matanuska Hut at the Staeheli residence on the weekend of May 19-20. T-shirts are also still available and are on sale at meetings as well as AMH and REI. Alan Julliard read a letter addressed to the President from REI concerning a donation of two Coleman lanterns, two Coleman stoves, two camper cooksets and two 10-quart pots for the new huts. Dave Staeheli emphasized the need for tools such as hammers and saws as well as utensils, dishes, brooms, etc. for the huts. Anyone having access to a two and half-ton flatbed truck or large trailer as well as a helicopter (?) is asked to please contact Neil O'Donnell or Marcy Baker.

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Those having orders for freeze-dried food purchase were asked to turn in order forms and money.

Kathy Burke had prints of Chugach Mountains for sale, some of the benefits to the Club.

Slide show was by Ron Rickman of an exotic trip through northern India to climb Jogin I in the Garwhal Himalaya, a trip that almost didn't happen as it was held up by the Indian government and army, who made even the U.S. Postal Service look good.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Alan Julliard

June 1990